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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA'S IIP: MORE DEMOCRACY PLEASE!

REF: A. (A) 06 BAGHDAD 04017
[1](#)B. (B) BAGHDAD 00559

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Team Leader James Knight: 1.4 (B) and (D).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team
(PRT) message.

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Ninewa's Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) continues to press for early provincial elections prior to referenda scheduled under the Iraqi Constitution's Article 140 process to resolve disputed territories, especially as violence in Ninewa directed against the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) expansion agenda takes a quantum leap. The IIP also emphasizes the importance of local recruitment for Iraqi security forces (ISF), especially the Iraqi Army. Coalition maneuver commanders of Multi-National Division North (MND-N) concur on the importance of local ISF recruitment.

KRG EXPANSION AGENDA RISKS VIOLENCE . . .

[1](#)2. (C) At a March 12 meeting at IIP's Ninewa headquarters, IIP Chair for Ninewa Dr. Mohammad Shakir insisted to IPAOs Holtsnider and Polacheck that a recent car-bombing attack against the IIP was carried out by al-Qaeda because of the IIP's participation in the provincial political process. He asserted that the national Kurdish-Shi'a coalition is actively delaying provincial elections until after the upcoming Article 140 referenda to allow the Kurd-dominated provincial government to facilitate the KRG expansion agenda. He underlined the need for provincial elections as soon as possible.

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Mohammad expressed great concern that the KRG Article 140 effort will quote flood the streets with blood unquote. He reassured IPA0 Polacheck that his party is making every effort to maintain social calm. Dr. Mohammad added that he maintains regular contact with Kurdish political parties to help control these emergent tensions.

. . . AND ELECTIONS NEEDED NOW

[1](#)4. (C) At our PRT's request Dr. Mohammad hosted a meeting between Sunni Arab religious leaders and the PRT Team Leader at IIP headquarters 17 April. All insisted on the urgency of immediate provincial

elections. The imams present decried low Sunni Arab representation in provincial and District governments, although recognizing the Sunni Arab error in boycotting the January 2005 provincial elections. Dr. Mohammad concluded the meeting by underscoring the danger these imams and scholars had braved -- especially from al-Qaeda -- meeting with PRT representatives.

¶5. (C) At a working lunch hosted on April 22 with MND-N DCG BG Wiercinski joined by PRT representatives, Dr. Mohammad and his party leadership reviewed IIP priorities for Ninewa: stabilize Mosul, expel al-Qaeda, and hold provincial elections. After these essential steps were concluded, resolution of disputed territories could be pursued through a free, fair, and transparent process. During this meeting Dr. Mohammad underscored that all Ninewa provincial institutions must be more representative of Ninewa's demographics.

¶6. (C) Dr. Mohammad emphasized that said insurgents use the inflammatory statements of Kurdish officials about KRG expansion as propaganda and to paint the IIP as treacherous for maintaining contact with Kurdish parties. He noted Kurdish insistence that the USG supports an independent Kurdistan. Team Leader Knight assured Dr. Mohammad that the U.S. supports a unified Iraq.

¶7. (C) Dr. Mohammad maintained these themes at two more meetings coordinated by our PRT with ranking Coalition representatives. At a 3 May meetings at

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PRT offices for MND-N CG MG Mixon and at a 13 May meeting for Multi-National Force Iraq Strategic Plans and Assessment Deputy BG Baverstock and Embassy Baghdad Political Officer Monz, Dr. Mohammad repeatedly raised the urgency of local representation in Iraqi security forces -- but IIP's public relations officer insisted that quote there can be no security until provincial elections unquote.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) Ninewa's provincial government and its Council are effective institutions, but the de facto exclusion of representatives of the province's Sunni Arab majority must be rectified. That majority is eager to contest for power through the ballot box. However, while those elections are hostage to the Article 140 process, both the Sunni Arab commitment to the democratic process and the credibility of the Article 140 process itself are at risk. Dr. Mohammad speaks credibly for Ninewa's moderate Sunni Arab majority as well as other ethnic groups feeling under threat from the KRG expansion agenda. His rising concern that elections continue to be postponed in favor of the Article 140 process reflects broad sentiment in Ninewa. END COMMENT.
CROCKER